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ABSTRACT

This is a report on the general nature of student concerns and activities as reflected by the 1969 National Student Association Congress. The author interprets past and present trends and occurrences rather than summarizing the activities of the congress. The topics covered include: student power (governance structures); legal rights; confrontation politics; militarism in American life and education; black issues and anti-racism; and educational reform. (Author/CS)

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"POWERLESSNESS CORRUPTS"

A Report on the U.S. National Student Association National Congress, with Commentary and a Few Suggestions.

22nd National Congress
August 1969

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September 1969

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The National Student Association National Congress is the yearly re-creative event in the ongoing life of the Association. Not only is it the occasion to elect new officers, adopt organizational resolutions, and set new substantive policies for the coming year, but it also is the organization's most effective moment for campus-by-campus contact. Because of the limitations faced by a national organization, and particularly by NSA in its financial capabilities, the national congress allows more intensive school contact, information exchange, and organizing than is possible to achieve during the year with traveling representatives or organizers. Related to this is the importance of the congress to individual schools as an oasis of renewal and re-education. It is a place where student leaders meet the other leaders of the youth movement across the country, are brought up to date on what's happening at other campuses and centers of change,** and broaden their own political and social contexts.

The important functions of the congress shape the nature of congress proceedings--i.e., the emphasis is on small-group, and person-to-person conversation and contact, rather than on large sessions of passive, centralized information-dispensing. In 1969, as discontent with the national headquarters grew, the general plenary sessions (which ran about eight of the evenings of the Congress) were less and less well-attended, and congress participants drifted into their own activities, both "social" and educational or political. While this kind of drift did not prevent the Association from passing minimal resolutions and policy declarations, it will likely have an effect on the upcoming year's activities, as low participant involvement and concern with Association-endorsed programs is likely to lead to less enthusiastic and effective implementation on the local campuses across the country.

** Student-run "organizations" such as Institute for Educational Development (Philadelphia), Educational Movement Center (San Diego), Transition Associates (New Haven), Campus Research Associates (New York).

--The Organization of This Report--

This is a report on the general nature of student concerns and activities as they were reflected by congress activities, rather than either a summary of congress activities per se or a description of the National Student Association itself. Because this kind of reporting requires a great deal of subjective interpretation of complex events, the paper must be viewed as its author's interpretation of past and present trends and occurrences, and not as a factual summary of completed activity. Beyond this there will be included the author's commentary and, in some cases, recommendations on the issues under discussion. With this forewarning, the reader can make the necessary distinctions between factual occurrences, editorial interpretation, and partisan recommendations.

The topics covered in this report roughly duplicate the major issue-areas in the congress "agenda." They are, in the order they will be discussed, as follows: student power--governance structures/ legal rights/ confrontation politics; militarism in American life and education; black issues and anti-racism; and educational reform. Last, a few final observations will be made about NSA and NSA activities.

---Student Power---

Student power is an umbrella term which covers many different areas of student concern--from educational reform, to the military on campus, to dormitory social rules. In this case the term will be used to cover three issues. The first two have to do with the formalized "process" of student power rather than with its substantive goals. The "process" issues are governance structures (as a means of institutionalizing student power) and legal rights (as a means of protecting student life and activity.) The third issue is that of confrontation politics--a non-institutionalized and non-formalized means of asserting

student power--which is viewed as a necessary activity as long as student power rights are not institutionally recognized or as long as even institutionalized forms fail to provide adequate means of (preventive) "redress of grievances." Confrontation politics differs from governance structure and legal rights issues in that it is both a means of demanding institutional power and a means of demanding those substantive changes which formalized power itself could supposedly bring if it were to be achieved. These rough definitions provide a means of working with the large and vague issues encompassed within those over-used and abused words, "student power."

Governance Issues.

The most notable feature of the governance issue was the almost complete lack of any discussion of the topic. There were no scheduled seminars or symposiums concerned with kinds of or mechanisms for university governance structures, and none were initiated by congress participants, although participant-established seminars are regular practice and perhaps the most vital feature at national congresses.

In trying to understand this apparent lack of concern with the issue, it is possible to suggest a number of trends and concerns which might be seen as "causes" of the phenomenon. One is the shifting focus to off-campus issues, which has been led by SDS but is increasingly a concern of less radical groups. This shift naturally moves attention away from complex problems of university governance, at least insofar as the off-campus issue is not viewed as the direct responsibility or result of university activity. In addition, SDS began some time ago to view the "student power" movement as basically antithetical to society-wide revolution, claiming it both draws effort away from community work and separates students from the more oppressed in society by increasing student class advantages. Insofar as the student activist "mainstream" reflects the concerns of its most radical fringe, this could be seen as a contributing factor in decline

of interest in governance structures.

Another possible "cause" is the increasing disillusionment and cynicism with all authorities, institutional forms, and organizations that has resulted from a year of bitter and often unsuccessful confrontation with the political and educational "establishment." This in turn has two effects. First, the strong issue-orientation of students (i.e., the Viet Nam War, military research, "repressive" faculty dismissals, etc.) moves them toward engagement with those issues and away from "process" type problems, such as decision-making structures (even though in the long run decision-making is basic to substantive, day-by-day issues). As disillusionment with means of slow institutional change grows, students are even more likely to favor more immediate and personal issues over institutional structure change. Second, students are unlikely to be interested in participating in a structure which is viewed as inherently, or hopelessly, corrupt. Reinforcing this view is the perception that any actual student participation in governance structures would be so weak as to be virtually useless, or probably co-opting in its effect on more basic change. Submersion as a one-quarter minority in a body of "conservative" faculty and administrators is not viewed by the student activist as a useful, honest, or significant change from the status quo. (The new plan for the Columbia University Senate suggests twenty student representatives out of a total of one hundred "senators.")

A third trend which seems of considerable importance is that which views student interests, seen as very different from those of the institution, as best protected and strengthened by development outside of formal "governmental" cooperation within their institutions. This view does not preclude a sharing of institutional power, but rather discounts it as an immediate goal as being either unlikely, if it is to be significant, or undesirable, if it comes in the token amounts which present student power could achieve. This in turn leads to a new emphasis on organizing and strengthening the student movement. There was much

discussion of the importance of "mobilizing an active student flank," of building a strongly independent student movement, and of finding ways of making student governments more financially and psychologically free of the "parent" institutions. What this indicates is a developing conception of the student movement as an independent force for political, social, and cultural change which should neither tie itself to nor concern itself exclusively with the university. The significance of this development, should it continue successfully and constructively, needn't be emphasized. If a projection is made of increasing numbers of persons engaged with education for increasing periods of time, in new kinds of institutional arrangements, and in more flexible relationships than presently exist, the potential strength of such an independent "student"-centered movement is enormous. A student movement of this kind, with its own internal structure and organization, its own deliberative bodies, its own financial base, and its own powerful alternative culture and life style, is one means of developing a large-scale "alternative" to the offerings of present educational institutions.

Returning to the problem of institutional change, it is possible to see the student movement, whenever it feels it has the strength, moving into cooperative decision-making bodies with present institutional authorities. It might be suggested that the student movement would best be advised to continue its independent development, even while seeking, as agents of the students, its rightful authority in the decision-making process of the institution. What this would mean is that the student movement would continue to regulate its own affairs insofar as they were their exclusive concerns (e.g., social rules, various student services, etc.) while joining with the faculty and administration in regulating affairs of institution-wide concern (e.g., educational policy, hiring practices, financial policy, relations with government and business, etc.). That is, the benefits of developing an independent student movement should in no way obscure the obvious importance of increasing student representation in the governance of the

institution. Similarly, the value of developing a large-scale alternative (i.e., alternative kinds of educational experiences, life-styles, personal relationships, etc.) to the offerings of present educational institutions should not obscure the importance of changing these non-governmental aspects of present institutions toward the new forms and practices developed in the alternative student organizations.

Whether or not this trend will develop into something more vigorous and wide-spread than it is now is an unanswerable question. At present, it is certainly not the norm on very many campuses.

The problem of reforming governance systems is still important for other reasons as well. Consolidation and recognition of a student leadership and a student position is a necessity for any permanent and stable situation in which a "student" interest is to exist. It is similarly important in responding to demands for change (often in "confrontation" form) which must be negotiated or settled between recognizable groups. Another point generally recognized was the undesirability of extensive judicial or due process battles which result from protests over substantive issues which ought to be dealt with in non-judicial, legislative forums. Legal rights are viewed as the "defensive" component of a battle, the "offensive" end of which is a political and not judicial matter.

Legal Rights.

The strong sentiment in the legal rights workshops was for a "constitutionalization" of the campuses. It was argued that the universities have accepted so much administrative law through increased involvement with federal projects and funding that they "surely" couldn't object to accepting constitutional guidelines in dealing with their students. (Note: It is interesting that a similar argument was used recently by a conservative Congressional legal counsel in arguing for tighter university adherence to anti-protest financial aid regulations--i.e., the universities, which presently certify "everything else in God's world," certainly ought to be able to certify compliance with anti-protest legislation. This argument seems to suggest that the universities should, if not immediately con-

stitutionalize their campuses or certify all federal regulations, pay close and immediate attention to the legal implications of their immense entanglement with public agencies and governing bodies. The complex issues involved in the area of university-societal legal/political relationships could well turn out to be far more important to the freedoms and concerns of both students and faculty than the present legal battles over due process, student courts, and so on.)

Whether or not the universities constitutionalize their campuses immediately, however, the clear trend issuing from the congress is for an increasingly active use of the courts as a means of protecting various student rights.

It was also obvious, however, that campus judicial systems are going to be the object of increased concern in the coming year. This is due to two developments. First, there seems a good possibility of increased use of confrontation politics, although not necessarily of an "orthodox" or familiar nature. Judgement of the "legality" of especially "novel" tactics will put a very heavy, and politically delicate, load upon judicial procedures. Second, the new judicial codes which have just been ground out at campuses across the country are phrased with such generality that considerable interpretation will be required to apply them to any particular activity. For instance, the new Cornell code lists as "behavior which may be subject to appropriate sanctions" the following: "Conduct that abridges the rights and interest of others. . .", and "Conduct that disrupts the normal functioning (emphasis added) of the university." With so much room left for interpretation, much thought must be given to who makes up the "judges and juries" in judicial proceedings, and not simply to whether the defendant has had the right to counsel, the right to call witnesses, and so on.

Four separate problems are involved here. First: who sets the general guidelines which describe acceptable and unacceptable activity? Second: who determines whether any particular activity falls or fails to fall within these

guidelines? Third: who determines what kinds of sanctions are appropriate in those cases where activity is judged unacceptable? Fourth: who makes the particular application of these sanctions in particular situations? A judicial system should not properly be engaged in any more than the second and the fourth of these issues. At the present time, however, judicial systems are asked to do all four tasks. What this results in, and what students clearly resent, is a judicial system which assures "due process," but "due process" in a repressive (to students) and non-democratic context. Students are not going to agree to enforce rules which they have had no part in making. Students are asserting that over-all methods of governance and legislation of rules are ultimately determinative of the justice of any legal code or system. Students at the congress (as elsewhere) would claim that unless institutional goals are re-examined and reformed with attention to new demands and needs, even an "enlightened" judicial system will be unacceptable and "repressive." The problem that must be faced, as stated by Executive Director Tamm of the International Association of Police Chiefs, is that ". . .we are living in a society in which people do not agree about the meaning of the law and recognize no authority to arbitrate their differences." It seems reasonable to assert that so fundamental a problem as this can be resolved only by a basic examination of the laws and programs of the society (or campus society), and of the ways in which these laws and programs are established. As long as distrust and unexamined differences exist over these issues, distrust is certain to exist over means of "arbitrating. . .differences" and the "meaning of the law." This again suggests the importance of considering governance structures and, more urgently, of finding immediate ways of discussing university goals and priorities.

In regard to specific legal rights programs, the ways in which students are preparing to defend themselves are indicated by the legal rights seminar topics:

9

The Right to Confidentiality; Right Against Illegal Seizure; The Legality of Your School's Discipline Code; Double Jeopardy; Discrimination in the University; First Amendment rights on Campus; Black Studies and the Law; Student Legal Aid Departments for Individual Schools; and State-wide Legal Rights Networks.

Confrontation Politics.

A number of general observations can be made about confrontation politics and the attitudes of the participants regarding them. First, although most participants might not agree philosophically with confrontation politics, they agree it works, or at least has obvious effects, which is more than could be said of other tactics.

Nearly every participant was opposed to human-directed violence, although feelings differed widely as to property-directed protest.

Tactics are likely to move away from traditional forms (sit-ins, etc.) toward more creative, novel kinds of "confrontation." This is due both to the inflexibility of these tactics as formerly used and to more effective means of punishing students who engage in such activities. Students are reading about new "defensive" measures being taken by administrations, and aren't likely to stick their necks out where they can be certain their heads will be chopped off. It is impossible to predict in general whether new tactics will tend toward more imaginative, less "destructive" means of confrontation of toward more extremist, "desperation" kinds of activity.

Confrontation in the past was viewed as a last-ditch method which was used only when all other channels had failed. It was not sought out, but occurred rather through "exhaustion" of other means of gaining a hearing or a change. In general, it was the more unintelligent authoritative response to student requests that brought about the most unintelligent demonstration, an unfortunate relationship recognized by the demonstrators themselves.

The issues of protest are likely to be changing. Seemingly predictable old

10

issues which are likely to remain important are anti-war protests and black protests, with a good chance of an increase in black-white student clashes, particularly in urban centers. New aspects which seem to be developing are a shifting of focus onto the faculty and onto off-campus issues. A recognition of the influence of the faculty in many areas (expecially academic) should bring about new forms of confrontation directed at them, although on non-academic issues the faculty may be increasingly viewed as potential allies rather than as adversaries. Off-campus issues, from rent-strikes to support for community action groups, are likely to increase in number. It seems safe to predict that this will pose an entire new set of legal and political problems for the university.

Those "off-campus" issues which are not directly controlled or influenced by the university--i.e., the War, the militarization of American life, pollution--will continue to strongly affect the university through their on-campus manifestations--recruiters, war-related research, etc.--with possibly the sharpest conflicts coming over the issue of institutional involvement with "defense" research. In some ways, these issues are the most difficult issues of all, since they are not directly under university control, and thus cannot be "solved" by university action, and yet are obviously closely related to university policy in a way that "implicates" the university with them. At the same time, this is the area in which the university can make its most positive attempts to adapt to the new requirements of our time--i.e., it is here that the university most clearly relates to society's problems without actually being the problem itself. What, then, is to be the nature of this relationship? In dealing with these issues, the university will begin to clarify the nature of its own relationship to society at large.

Another possible development will be the increased use of "confrontation" (broadly defined) as other than a last-ditch tactic. That is, it won't necessarily be used only after other means of communication or influence have failed. This

11

development could result from a general belief in the effectiveness of confrontation as a tactic at any time, if it is properly used. This last qualification is necessary, as confrontation methods must be less drastic than before if they are to be used frequently with positive results.

It seems that administrators could recognize at least three notions: that confrontation politcs need not be coercive or violent; that "confrontation" has probably been the major stimulus for change or a new willingness to change on their campuses; and that confrontation politics could become a force for changes which they themselves, given their basic educational principles, should like to see in increasing number. The challenge then faced by administrators and students alike is to find a good conversion mechanism for wants and demands so that confrontation can produce positive programs rather than hasty, short-term concessions (or expulsions) which neither satisfy students nor meet standards of intelligent reform.

For students this might imply the need for new training programs in confrontation politics--for example, the use of role-playing and game theory to gain a realistic understanding of who has power and who has authority on specific issues, and of where interests really coincide or differ. These and other sophisticated simulation training programs might well help students become more intelligent and effective in making "demands" of themselves and of the university. The advantages of this kind of student activism seem evident enough to warrant administration acceptance, if not actual support, of such programs.

The challenge this presents to the "authorities" of the university (whether faculty, administration, trustees, or regents) is to develop both a new philosophical openness to student "demands" and new forms through which to respond to these "demands." ** This requires a new understanding of "civil disobedience" and

** This must not be viewed as a substitute or total alternative to finding new governance mechanisms, but only as a means of responding positively to a potent existing force for change. It encourages openness in our efforts to understand how institutional change occurs and to finding new and imaginative ways of facilitating such change in educational institutions in an age when change is a necessary and constant factor.

traditionally-defined disruptive activity. (A basis for such reconsideration is suggested by political scientist Harvey Wheeler in his paper, "The Constitutional Right to Civil Disobedience.") This returns discussion to the issue of judicial systems, which must incorporate a new concept of the right of students to civil disobedience. It argues for the creation of a judicial forum which can freely consider the possibility that particular forms of protest-activity represent valid and legal means of "petitioning for redress of grievances." This means judging an action not simply on the basis of its conformance to pre-set rules of behavior, but also in light of the alternative actions and options that were actually available to the acting party at the time. Thus it would be improper to suggest that "no amnesty" be granted in any case, for in some cases actions might be declared legal and proper, given the circumstances and context in which they occurred. This also suggests the undesirability of trying to draw clear lines between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" behavior, since one couldn't know beforehand the circumstances surrounding the behavior, the actions which motivated it, and the alternatives to it that existed at the time. (This, of course, does not rule out the necessity of setting some kind of limit on behavior beforehand--e.g., person-directed violence, intimidation, arson, and so on; would never be considered justifiable. Wheeler, in his article, also suggests such additional tests for the activity as the action having to have a direct relationship to the grievance complained of; and that there should be prior evidence of an intent to challenge a specific "governmental" law or program.) (Again, this idea does not argue against the importance of governance reforms; however, given the difficulty of creating a governing body which, no matter how democratically composed or how well-informed its electorate, does not still slip into intransigence, blindness, prejudice, or ignorance on important issues, it seems important to establish permanent non-legislative channels for presenting grievances and demands for authoritative consideration. The more rapidly social

13

changes occur in a system, the more necessary such channels would seem to be. ***

---Militarism in American Life and Education---

This study area focussed on the increasing militarization of American life and education, which manifests itself generally in such attitudes as "efficiency for efficiency"s sake" and the subordination of qualitative and political questions to technological ends, and more specifically in the selective service system, the War in Viet Nam, in increasing chemical and biological weapons research, and so on. There was an increasing sense of university "complicity" in these problems through contracts and research policies, course subject matter and teaching methodologies, institutional involvements (false "neutrality" toward the draft and the War), and institutional financial and investment policies.

Even if the War completely ends, these issues are certain to grow in importance. They will range from radical attacks on "counterinsurgency research" to moderate attacks on extensive university involvement with chemical and biological weapons research. Superficial manifestations of militarism, such as military recruiters on campus, will increasingly be ignored as diversions from the real issues--classified and "counterinsurgency" research, and other more fundamental kinds of military-educational contracts and cooperation.

*** In face of such violent and provocative disruptions as the recent one at the Harvard Center for International Affairs (Sept. 26), it is especially important to consider these ideas in order to avoid an irrational stampede to the side of "law and order," and a rigid positioning against all demonstrators. It is important to remind ourselves that in the past the overwhelmingly preponderant use of "violence" and "coercion" has been by the authorities (both civil and university) in either covert or overt form. The difficulty of keeping oneself open to the consideration of such ideas as creating new channels for positive "confrontation politics" (or civil disobedience) is justified only by the importance of this openness to achieving constructive change, and by the disastrous consequences which would follow a closing of our minds and "cracking down."

14

Related to this will be the issue of the nature of social science research and of "academic neutrality." As one of the seminar topics asked: "In Whose Interest is Social Science Research?" The statement recently adopted by the American Sociological Association at their national convention illustrates this issue well: "Most research by U.S. sociologists is funded and controlled by corporate interests, military-political elites, and the welfare bureaucracy, and has been oriented toward studying oppressed peoples for the purposes of their oppressors." As David Easton's presidential address to the American Political Science Association further indicates, this kind of thinking is spreading among professional as well as student ranks. The clear implication of all this is that the university community had best begin examining these issues with determination, honesty, and great immediacy, if for no other reason than the rather cynical one that major organized student-led opposition to current policies is not long in coming, even though it is unlikely to be effectively organized on a large scale this coming year.

In regard to this problem, the Viet Nam Moratorium presents an excellent opportunity to begin grappling with the difficult issues involved. The Moratorium presents an opportunity for the entire educational "community" to engage in discussion of precisely the problems mentioned above. It presents a time for honest community renewal, centered around an issue which almost the entire community for once can agree is worth discussing. Discussion of the war itself can be turned to discussion of the complex problems of the university's relation to society and to national programs, and plans can begin being developed to respond intelligently to the inevitable demands that will be made in the coming months and years. Simple discussion of these obviously important, and possibly crucial issues, will not in any way impair "institutional neutrality," unless the term is defined so narrowly as to exclude any kind of intellectual or social response to

15

the crucial issues of the day. The October Moratorium now appears to be developing a relatively immense national backing. The expansion of the Moratorium into a two-day period in November will present the universities with further opportunities and further pitfalls. To fail to act positively before these events could only add weight to the charge that higher education is unable to "act for itself."

---Black Issues and Anti-Racism---

It is difficult to report much about the activities of the Third World Commission, which produced the new National Association of Black Students (NABS), as all Third World sessions were closed to non-Third World persons. The NSA did agree to raise $50,000 to supports NABS, and the "floor-fight" which led to this agreement represented the main evidence of black concerns at the Congress. In sum, the blacks were thoughtfully well-organized and militant, and this can be taken as an indication of how they will act during the coming year.

A good illustration of the problems surrounding the anti-racism issue is the fight that occurred over credentials. In brief, the majority report of the credentials committee recommended that all delegations be seated without being certified as to whether they had engaged in "sufficient" anti-racism work during the previous year. This was contrary to a resolution passed at the previous Congress which had made anti-racism work for the following year a requirement for receiving credentials at this year's Congress. The majority report argued that anti-racism work would be least helped by excluding those schools which were most in need of it from further NSA involvement. Although the author concurs with this judgement, he is aware of the difficulties still to be faced in making people confront their own prejudices and doing more about them in the coming year than was done in the last. Anti-racism work, though a problem of extreme urgency, is bound into the dilemma of asking people to sit in judgement upon themselves, their close associates, and the institutions which sustain them. As recent experience

16

has shown, anti-racism organizing is extremely discouraging work. While it is true that the congress did agree to make anti-racism work their number one priority for the coming year, it remains to be seen how enthusiastically and effectively the programs to implement this priority are carried out. Some interesting preliminary literature on the problems involved is listed in the bibliography at the end of this report. NSA's success in this area in the coming year might be viewed as an important indicator of the possibilities and problems to be faced in more difficult, non-campus situations in the general society.

Almost needless to say, NSA's efforts should not be simply observed, but rather aided or duplicated by the other members of the educational community. Anti-racism is undoubtedly the most totally, sub-consciously, and groundlessly avoided issue of the last two years. The white community has assiduously ignored black suggestions that whites examine their own house and stop trying to formulate programs for blacks. The educational community has been as active in its avoidance of these suggestions as has any other part of the system, focussing its minimal energies on scrutinizing the details of black curricula with a "concern" the blacks would probably be more than willing to do without. The brief literature collected at the congress and listed in the bibliography presents some ideas as to how the white educational community could begin paying genuine attention to its own deep-seated and unexamined forms of institutional racism. In spite of the earlier mentioned difficulties inherent in the nature of white anti-racism work, the institutions and associations of higher education must shed their myth of "non-involvement" and find ways of actively engaging themselves with their own problems. Because of the newness and the difficulty of the problems, perhaps a good way to start would be to seek cooperation with the National Student Association as it also begins to renew its efforts and understanding of the problem this fall.

---Educational Reform---

The following "outline" represents the author's conception of the major issue-areas facing the (student) educational reform movement today. The particular organization of ideas presented here was shaped by the first few days of group discussion in the educational reform study area. Within each issue-area, a brief description is included of the ways students are presently engaged with the problem.

Issue-Area One: Fundamental principles and goals of an educational system.

Ideas regarding fundamental goals and principles are very vague in the movement, as they are in the rest of the educational community. Two ideas, however, were particularly prominent and might be viewed as the major themes which shape more specific theories and programs. They were, in highly-generalized form: 1) a stress on personal needs and development over societal needs; 2) a stress on finding forms of "socially relevant" study.

Issue-Area Two: Fundamental principles and goals as embodied in the structures of the higher education system.

Part A: What is the maximally desirable set of structures and programs to achieve your goals?

Ideas considered here are: independent study programs, concomitant with modularly structured and individualized courses of study (including elimination of grades and standardized evaluation procedures; new uses of professors and other persons of expertise as "resources", "consultants," and "counselors" rather than "instructors;" new forms of student-to-student teacher-learner relationships; increased attention to "affective" educational experiences and to interpersonal relations in learning (and therefore work) situations; more "laboratory" experience in the form of "action research" in the social sciences and creative art in the humanities; and use of programmed materials for easily digestable, rote-type subject matter.

Methods

Part B: Having decided upon programs and structures, what is the best general approach available to achieve them given present institutional arrangements?

Several approaches were considered. One is to push specific programs on several fronts, each of which has tie-ups with other parts of the educational program and is therefore likely to precipitate further change: e.g., grading reform or abolition; elimination of requirements; course evaluation; expanded independent study programs; and so on. Most of the large number of schools which have now developed a serious educational reform movement are presently engaged in this approach in one form or another.

A second approach is to develop a master plan for the total reconstruction of the curriculum, and then organize around adoption of this totality rather than piecemeal programs. This is the approach used successfully to achieve the recent Brown University reforms and could become more widely used should the educational reform movement become better organized with more inter-school cooperation and program-development.

A third approach is to developing a total alternative plan but seeking its implementation on a limited scale--e.g., in an "inner college" or "residential college" in which only a small part of the total student body participates, but does so on a full-time basis. This approach is gaining increasing consideration, as it offers the advantages of 1) allowing an "experimental"approach to larger change; and 2) requiring a smaller group of willing student and faculty to initiate it. These advantages are particularly important at large universities, where the problem of sheer size presents acute obstacles to reformers, leading many to advocate the formation of "cluster colleges" as a necessary prerequisite for other changes.

Part C: Having decided upon a general approach, what are the optimal tactics and strategies available to carry it out?

Here the ideas range widely, as indicated by the following random list: extensive faculty relations work; seeking outside grants to establish student-run

19

programs and alternatives; extensive organizing of students through personal contacts, forums, various media devices, etc.; boycotts and class strikes; minor harassment and personal confrontation methods; class "discussions" of educational philosophy, programs, and course goals; departmental-based study and action groups; publicity stunts--e.g, burning exams, vacating classrooms to a professor and a student's running tape recorder, etc.; various uses of course and teacher evaluation. In addition, consideration is being given to the possible uses of university governing bodies to speed curricular reform (assuming the presence of significant student power, or representation.).

Issue-Area Three: Fundamental principles and goals as embodied and developed outside the structures and programs of the "system"--values and the social-cultural environment--but still within the "system."

The social-cultural environment is recognized as important because it both heavily affects the formation of the learner's values and is a self-contained valuable experience itself. This environment isn't deliberately organized but is rather an outcome of the over-all student "culture(s)." Nevertheless, there exist enough differences among student cultures at different institutions so that the relative influence of political and social activism, drug sub-cultures, artistic and musical movements, and so on, becomes an important consideration in talking about constructing any "new" educational experience. This means that educational movement workers cannot narrow themselves to considering only "curricular" reforms in their activities, but must also take into account the effect of the social and cultural environment they will be joining and helping to create through their actions. Although this would seem to imply the need for a heightened political awareness in the educational reform movement, this has yet to significantly develop.

Issue-Area Four: Constructing alternative structures, programs, life-styles, and environments.

There exists considerable feeling on the "leading edge" of the educational reform movement that present educational institutions offer no openness or

20

possibility for change at the present time. Thus it becomes necessary to go completely outside the "system" and establish alternative programs, cultures, and life-styles in which people can build new lives and new programs to replace the irreparably distorted institutions of the status quo. (Even if you still feel reform within established institutions is possible, as this author does, there are still great advantages to be gained by going outside present institutions, whose repressive values and shortage of "space" for real innovation makes the discovery and development of new programs and ways of living extremely difficult.) A number of such attempts, often called "living-learning communities," have been initiated and are now in the process of development. Related to this concern is that for finding institutional forms and life-styles which are flexible, self-examining, and open to continuous renewal, so that following generations needn't repeat your struggle to breakaway from established institutions and value-systems.

Issue-Area Five: The Impossibility of educational reform.

A final but crucial judgement which must be made is whether or not educational reform is a realistic means of seeking social change in our present society. While few students presently seem to feel that it is useless (though more are considering the option of leaving present institutions in the ways just described) those who do are left seeking new (or very old) forms of political-social action. This in turn could lead to the development of entirely different models of political-educational ways of life, although no attempt will be made here to guess what new ideas and programs of this sort will be devised.

---Some Final Observations---

Little has been said of the Services department of NSA, even though the services offered to schools are extensive and valuable, both in the content of

the programs offered and in the money income they bring NSA and member schools. An idea of what the Service department offers may be gained by reading the services handbook referenced in the Miscellaneous section of the bibliography.

A review of the NSA National Supervisory Board's report (Appendix A) to the congress gives a good idea of the problems NSA faced last year and the programs and priorities it has set for itself for the coming year.

It is the author's "observation" that NSA will continue to have numberous problems in the coming year--financially and organizationally. Student dislike of centralized organizations, the very diversity and difficulty of local campus problems, plus foundation and government distaste for student organizations which "dare" to play an active social-political role combine to produce nearly overwhelming obstacles to a successful "national student union." Thus, though NSA will survive the coming year and strengthen its position, it is likely to remain in a precarious position, far from being a true national student union.

The new president of NSA, Mr. Charlie Palmer, appears to be a person whom, if approached with full openness and honesty, will himself be willing to openly consider common problems with "establishement" organizations such as the Council. No evaluation of this year's NSA staff is yet possilbe. How much President Palmer will "set the tone" of the national office won't be known until it is seen what particular relationships of authority, independence, and cooperation he tries to establish in the central staff.

The title of this report is "powerlessness corrupts." More than a play on words, this title indicates the very observable reality that people without power lose control over their own lives and over the quality-determining decisions about their lives which only they have a right to make; this in turn leads to

the great corruption--the loss of the self-confidence, self-respect, and self-love which are man's fundamental motivation in his search for and maintenance of human good.

Mayor Richard D. Hatcher of Gary, Indiana, said the same thing this spring in a commencement address to graduating seniors, whom he implored not to abandon, through either cynicism or despair, their struggle for change:

> "If we're really striving for peace and unity, now is the time to practice what we preach. There is nothing sacred in silence. There's nothing Christian in powerlessness. There's nothing temperate in timidity. Each of us has a moral committment to his community and to his fellow man."

Implications of the NSA Congress for the work of the Council.

1. Reform of institutional governance will have to take into account the trend in the student movement to set up wholly independent organizations which will represent students on issues both directly related to the institution and independent of the institution--i.e., these independent student organizations will seek to represent the student body in the institutional governance process, but as an independent agent rather than as a sub-part of the process.

2. Changes in campus judicial procedures, if they are to be effective, must clarify and, in the process, limit the tasks of campus judiciaries. Specifically, the tasks of setting the guidelines of acceptable conduct and of deciding appropriate sanctions for infractions should be moved to a non-judicial forum, which should include equitable student representation.

3. Increasing use of "confrontation politics"--attempts to get change by working outside established channels--suggests that administrations and faculty might better work with students in developing appropriate new political approaches rather than simply responding to their use.

4. The issues behind the Vietnam Moratorium are of such fundamental importance to society and to the roles of colleges in society that they should be priority matters for campus discussion and action even in the absence of the Moratorium movement.

5. The issue of racism in society and on campus is so important that ACE should work with NSA in the coming year trying to find appropriate actions for colleges to take beyond instituting black studies or establishing separatist facilities.

6. Serious and open-minded attention should be given to the development of new curricular patterns and teacher-learner relationships and to institutional support for the development of alternative educational experiences, on or off-campus.

7. ACE should initiate discussions with the new president of NSA on ways in which we might work together.

8. Overall, the issues in 1 through 6 represent facets of institutional unresponsiveness to student concerns and the consequent frustrations and increasing attempts to move around rather than through institutional procedures. ACE should try to identify why and where unresponsiveness occurs, and ways of combatting such unresponsiveness, as well as searching for new means of assuring a fair hearing for all claims and suggestions. "Fair hearing" in this sense must include the real possibility of the recommended change actually being made.

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APPENDIX A

REPORT OF THE 1969--1970 NATIONAL SUPERVISORY BOARD to the 22nd National Student Congress:

We are all committed as individuals to fundamental social change in America, but the vehicle which we seek to utilize in this effort, the NSA, has become structurally inadequate, economically prostrate, and politically directionless. The frustration this has produced, both for us, the Third World, and other groups with which we could ally ourselves, has reached its peak in the chaos of this congress.

We propose, therefore, a new direction, a new structure, a new financial base, and a new politics. It can be based on the experiences we have all shared, the interests we all have in common, and the goals we all seek to realize. We must organize ourselves, and we must organize our schools, to work in the following areas:

I. ANTI-RACISM WORK

We believe that since racism is a problem origination in the white community of which most of us are member, that our basic orientation be to educate and organize whites.

We identify two major problems which contribute to the racist nature of society:

1.) the insensitivity of individuals to the mechanisms and mores of other cultures,
2.) the actions and policies of institutions which deny societal access to members of the Third World.

We committ ourselves to programs dealing in both areas: to developing through national and area staff, comprehensive analyses of the mechanics and solutions of both problems, and to applying, through the area staff and a corps of trained organizers these analyses to the particular campuses and communities. The working papers presented ideas didscussed at this Congress by all of us today, by the PAR, and by the anti--racism caucus provide a model to guide our efforts.

II. DECENTRALIZATION AND AREA COORDINATION

"Student power" work on campuses, membership base strengthening, and inter-university communication must be facilitated by the hiring of full-time personnel for each area. This personnel must be selected by and be responsible to the Area Steering Committees. The development of cohesive and powerful student networks in each area by the coordinator and NSB members will allow our ultimate dream of a national student union to be achieved.

III. EDUCATIONAL REFORM

For student, reform of the educational institutions of this country are both our urgent need and unique opportunity. The Center for Educational Reform, already decentralizing throughout the country, and leading NSA's efforts in this important area, should be continued. Its projects must serve as both a focus on work and center for informational and other assistance to local efforts.

IV. UNIFICATION OF EFFORTS IN LEGAL RIGHTS, DRUG STUDIES, "DRAFT" RESISTANCE

We urge bringing together of these programs into one oriented toward legal aid and information dissemination on student rights, drugs, and the draft. The decentralization of this program from Washington would also be advisable if potential financial resources materialize.

V. VIETNAM MORATORIUM

We must lend our support to the Vietnam moratorium planned for the coming Fall, and any other actions which develop and are deemed appropriate by the NSB and officers to bring immediate withdrawal from Vietnam.

These are our priorities. Specific programs must be formalized by the NSB, the area steering committees, and the National Office to pursue these priorities. The following guidelines should be met.

I. AREA CENTERS

The development of area centers are of utmost importance. The area coordinator, the full-time anti-racism coordinator, the ed. reform and legal rights staff will work out of these centers. They shall train organizers for the communities and campuses in each of these areas -- racism, ed. reform, student power, and legal rights. They shall distribute information pertaining to the issue areas. And they shall assist the individual campuses in solving problems and in developing an independent financial base.

II. NATIONAL OFFICE

Although the staff in the national office will be reduced, its importance will remain paramount. The officers must articulate and coordinate our purposes and programs at a national level. Campus liason information service, service functions can sensibly remain centralized. And national financial sources can be investigated and exploited as long as they do not compromise the independent position of the association.

III. Finances

We propose the following steps be taken to rebuild and stabilize our economic base:

1. Full utilization of the Services Contract by those member schools who chose to do so.
2. Lowering national dues to $25 for schools under 3,000 students and $50 for schools over 3,000 students.

This allows significant increases in regional and area assessments.

3. Development of national grant proposals.
4. Development of regional and area sources of income by us all, but particularly by the area coordinators and NSB members. Possibilities include: a.) Foundations, b.) Universities and colleges, c.) Unions, d.) Churches, e.) Corporations, f.) Etc. (Again, these should not compromise the independence of the Association.)
5. National, regional and local resource productive projects such as the development of campus organizing skills training centers.

In addition, present income from the Ed Reform grant, Legal Rights grant, dues, and services contracts must be conserved and administered as carefully and responsibly as possible.